Deaths of children due to infection

3930. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of children die due to infection at the time of birth;

(b) whether it is also a fact that more than 50 per cent mothers deliver their babies without getting access to Government health care infrastructure; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to provide basic health care infrastructure in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Infection is a major cause of deaths in the neo-natal period, *i.e.* the first month of life, indeed throughout the first year of life.

(b) The proportion of babies delivered at the Government health care facilities is steadily improving and the rates vary considerably in different parts of India. Most of those not delivered at Government health facilities are attended by local birth attendants who have been trained by the Government and provided a safe delivery kit.

(c) Vigorous efforts by the Government are under way to ensure safe delivery and optimal new born care throughout the country as follows:—

(1) Improvement in physical infrastructure at Primary Health Centres and first level referral hospitals were made under the RCH Programme.

(2) Extensive in-service training for physicians, ANMs and Dais with provision of appropriate tools provided throughout the country.

(3) Measures were taken to improve neo-natal care at first level referral hospitals under a special programme coordinated by National Neonatology Forum. Appropriate Neo-natal Care equipment provided in the districts where training was completed.

(4) The Indian Council of Medical Research has initiated a project on Home Based Management of Young Infants (0-60 days) in rural areas of five States (Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan) for reduction of neo-natal mortality.